DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 302 CS 013 428

AUTHOR Frantantoni, Danielle Marie
TITLE The Effects of Direct Instruction of Sight Vocabulary and How It Can Enhance Reading Rate and Fluency.
PUB DATE 1999-05-00
NOTE 39p.; M.A. Research Project, Kean University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Instructional Effectiveness; Low Achievement; *Middle School Students; Middle Schools; *Reading Improvement; Reading Rate; Reading Research; *Sight Vocabulary; *Tutoring; Word Recognition
IDENTIFIERS *Direct Instruction; Reading Fluency

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effectiveness of tutoring intervention for sight word acquisition and determined whether any progress was matched by improved reading fluency, reading rate, and sight word identification. Nine middle school students from Hillside, New Jersey were selected based upon teacher referral for poor reading skills. "Edward Fry's List of 'Instant Words'" was used to determine students' accuracy of recognition of sight words. Number of words identified incorrectly were recorded for each participant and utilized during the tutoring intervention as the target words with the experimental group, while the control group continued their regular reading routine. In addition, reading rate and reading fluency in the form of words and errors per minute was also assessed. Participants received a pre and posttest in all three areas being evaluated. After the baseline data were collected, the tutoring phase began. Results indicated that students showed improvements in sight word identification, reading rate and reading fluency during the tutoring phase and at the completion of the study. Admittedly, direct instruction on sight vocabulary with learning disabled students will not solve all reading disabilities but it may be one of the most important attributes in aiding in their difficulties. Contains 43 references and 3 tables of data; an appendix contains a reading passage. (Author/RS)

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ED 427 302

The Effects of Direct Instruction of Sight Vocabulary and How it can Enhance Reading Rate and Fluency

By

Danielle Marie Frantantoni

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
Of
Masters of Arts Degree

May, 1999

Received
4/5/99

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Abstract

This study assessed the effectiveness of tutoring intervention for sight word acquisition and determined whether any progress was matched by improved reading fluency, reading rate, and sight word identification. Nine middle school students from Hillside, New Jersey were selected based upon teacher referral for poor reading skills. *Edward Fry's List of "Instant Words"* was used to determine students' accuracy of recognition of sight words. Number of words identified incorrectly were recorded for each participant and utilized during the tutoring intervention as the target words with the experimental group while the control group continued their regular reading routine. In addition reading rate and reading fluency in the form of words and errors per minute was also assessed. Participants received a pre and posttest in all three areas being evaluated. After the baseline data were collected, the tutoring phase began. Results indicated that students showed improvements in sight word identification, reading rate and reading fluency during the tutoring phase and at the completion of the study. Admittedly, direct instruction on sight vocabulary with learning disabled students will not solve all reading disabilities but it may be one of the most important attributes in aiding in their difficulties.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to my best friend and companion Johnny who provided me with support and encouragement, also for his joyous ability to create laughter and love in my life.

To Kari, for all the long nights spent at the kitchen table, talking and working hard to meet deadlines.

Thanks to Dr. Albert Mazurkiewicz for his guidance throughout this study.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their unconditional support and their belief in me.

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One of the most consistent research findings about children with reading disabilities is that they encounter their most serious reading difficulties at the word (Stanovich, 1986). Inefficiency in word recognition processes require excessive cognitive capacity, leaving minimal capacity for comprehension to occur. Thus, nonfluent word recognition and the lack of direct instruction of sight vocabulary for learning disabled students results in unrewarding reading experiences that lead to less involvement in reading and reading-related activities.

Nonfluent reading also leads to less reading. Lack of practice in reading then leads to a failure to practice automatic word identification. When practice continues to be avoided the failure process is perpetuated not only in fluency and word acquisition but also can hinder the students' ability to capture other skills related to reading such as, vocabulary development and comprehension, but most importantly knowledge (Nathan, 1991).

This issue is especially important to special education teachers as they try to move their students toward their ultimate goal of declassification. Meffer and Pettegrew (1997) feel that fluency and sight vocabulary through direct instruction is one effective way to develop reading strategies for the developmentally disabled population. They also stated that it is critical for the students as schools move toward greater inclusion of the learning disabled children into the general education.

The purpose of this study is to possibly provide a workable strategy for the learning disabled child to build sight vocabulary skills that will then provide them with an improvement in reading fluency and rate. Using the flash card approach can possibly

provide students with quick, easy and reinforced practice. Tucker (1989) recommends a flash card drill based approach. In this type of approach words are presented in a rapid manner with brief periods of praise.

Although there are many other techniques for teaching sight vocabulary the benefits of this procedure are clear. One, it provides a personal interaction with the teacher, two, the child controls the rate because the student does the majority of the speaking (and can hold the flash card providing a tangible attribute) until there is an error and three, it provides instant error correction with feedback. Also, this type of instruction maximizes the number of responses for the child. Singh and Singh (1988) found that this procedure produces fewer errors, improved reading rates, and produces better long term gains in reading fluency.

Browder and Lalli (1991) have also reviewed many techniques used to teach word identification and stated that this type of feedback procedure is an effective manner with disabled students. When reviewing related research on this topic, a study done by Sharla Nicholas Fasko (1996) assessed the effectiveness of peer tutoring for sight vocabulary acquisition. Fasko's study revealed that improvement on sight word acquisition was evident during the intervention phase of peer tutoring using flash cards. Fasko indicated that there were definite improvements in acquisition of words and fluency for three out of the four students studied.

For instance, student one had identified 27 out of 60 words for sight vocabulary and after the intervention stage was given, student one was reassessed five more times after each flash card peer tutoring session. Results were as follows, assessment 1

revealed 150 words out of 250 were identified, assessment 2 indicated 170 of 250 words mastered, assessments 3 showed 200 out of 250 words mastered, assessment 4 resulted in 210 of 250 words mastered and the final assessment 5 showed that student one was identifying 230 of the 250 words.

Fasko (1996) also linked this with fluency by calculating words per minute. Using student one as an example, baseline fluency was 19 words per minute, after the intervention of word acquisition with the flash card approach through peer tutoring, student one had an increase in words read per minute. After only several sessions with student one, reading rate for fluency rose to 25 words per minute. By the 36th session student one was reading 69 words per minute. Results of this study clearly show promising data regarding the flash card method for improving sight vocabulary, its link to fluency and reading rate.

With respect to learning disabled readers, recent research find that the systematic direct instruction is the most potent reading strategy (Gersten, 1985). Even though the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension and knowledge, learning disabled students frequently need a more basic, systematic and repetitive approach to learning. Thus, an important goal for educators of the special education population is to improving their abilities to read individual words correctly and rapidly (Cohen, 1988).

For the general population most words become part of a student's sight vocabulary because they are repeatedly and correctly identified (Callington, 1988). Nevertheless, students who have learning disabilities receive limited exposure to words due to their lack of independent reading skills. Grunkmeyer, 1986 stated that sight

vocabulary lists are a valuable and effective tool when one is involved with the teaching of developmental or remedial students. Furthermore, there is considerable research showing word recognition skills to be a major correlation of reading (Rose, McEntire, Dowdy, 1982).

HYPOTHESIS

This study was established to determine the effects of direct instruction of sight vocabulary on reading. For the purpose of this study it was hypothesized that the direct instruction of sight vocabulary via the flash card method with learning disabled students will not improve sight word acquisition, reading rate, or reading fluency.

PROCEDURES

This study was executed over a period of eight weeks at Walter O. Krumbiegel Middle School in Hillside, New Jersey. Two samples were used. A Control sample and an Experimental sample. Nine learning disabled students were randomly assigned to one of the samples. The Experimental sample received fifteen minutes of daily instruction on sight vocabulary. The Control sample continued their daily reading regimen.

The Experimental samples' sight words were taken from *Edward Fry's List of "Instant Words"*. All students in the Experimental sample were given an assessment on the first three hundred words. Each word was presented to the student, a list of target words were compiled by the student's inability to identify the given word within three seconds after it had been presented to them. these words were then used as the target words for tutoring, utilizing ten words at a time. No feedback was given during this assessment. All ten words were put on 3 x 5 index cards, to be used as flash cards during the tutoring session. After the words had been presented, those, which had been correctly identified, were re-presented in an attempt to control for guessing.

The tutoring session had two main segments: (a) intensive, individual practice on sight words and, (b) testing and monitoring of sight words. Students were given five to seven minutes daily to practice the ten words and then they were quizzed on a one to one basis on the flash cards for the next seven to nine minutes. If a word was identified correctly, it received a tally mark on the reverse side of the index card. If a word was not identified correctly, the teacher told the student the correct word, asked the student to repeat it and then reshuffled it into the deck of ten. Once a word received five tally marks on the reverse side of the index card, it was considered mastered, removed from the deck of ten and a new word was added. All ten-index cards were shuffled prior to and during each session. The Control sample received no specific training on sight vocabulary. They continued to carry out their daily reading routine.

Both samples were administered a pre and posttest in two areas (1) on recognition of sight words in isolation and (2) in reading a passage for rate and fluency. At the end of

one minute, reading rate based on words per minute and errors per minute were recorded. The passage that was used for the pre and posttest contained a high percentage of "sight vocabulary" words. Differences between the means were analyzed for significance.

RESULTS

Data from probes were collected by the examiner and recorded on tables. Nine learning disabled students were given a pretest and posttest in the following areas; identification of sight vocabulary, reading rate and reading fluency. The total number of sight vocabulary was ascertained by the students' inability to identify the word within three seconds. Reading rate and fluency was calculated by words read per minute and errors made within a minute.

The mean and standard deviation were computed for each group and the data was then utilized to obtain a t to determine if there was a significant difference in identification of sight vocabulary, reading rate and reading fluency, between the control group and the experimental at the outset and conclusion of the study.

Table I indicates the amount of sight words stated incorrectly out of 300 of the

Table I

Standard Deviation and t Pretest and Posttest Results for Word Recognition

		M	SD	t	Sig.
Experimental Group	Pretest	31.20	23.812	.90	NS
Control Group	Pretest	20.25	4.03		
Experimental Group	Posttest	18.6	15.77	1.28	NS
Control Group	Posttest	9.80	5.57		

sight words by Fry's List. As indicated in Table I the mean score for learning disabled students at the outset of this study was markedly different (almost 4 points) but this difference was not significant. Both samples improved their word recognition as a result of instruction with the experimental sample making the greatest improvement (12.40 vs. 10.45) but this difference was not significant.

The mean raw scores as well as the standard deviation and the t test for reading rate are shown below. As indicated in Table II the experimental groups' reading rate was higher on the posttest (109.60) than on the pre test (94.8), indicating some growth.

Table II

Standard Deviation, and t Pretest and Posttest Results for Reading Rate

		M	SD	t	Sig.
Experimental Group	Pretest	94.8	27.99	.97	NS
Control Group	Pretest	110.5	17.69		
Experimental Group	Posttest	109.60	34.61	.68	NS
Control Group	Posttest	90.40	53.35		

The control group on the other hand, reduced their reading rate. The mean difference at the outset and conclusion were not significant as shown by the t of .97 and .68.

Table III show an analysis of the mean scores of the pretest and posttest for

Table III

Standard Deviation, and t Pretest and Posttest Results for Reading Fluency

		M	SD	t	Sig.
Experimental Group	Pretest	9.4	2.88	.24	NS
Control Group	Pretest	10.0	4.69		
Experimental Group	Posttest	2.00	1.58	.17	NS
Control Group	Posttest	2.20	1.92		

reading fluency between the control group and experimental group. As indicated in Table III the mean scores for the experimental group declined to a slightly larger extent in errors per minute than did the control group. This difference although an improvement was not significant as indicated by the t of .17. Although there was a difference between the mean scores in all three Tables, non-of them were statistically significant.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study indicate that the direct instruction of sight vocabulary did not have a positive effect with learning disabled students in improving their reading

ability. There was a slight increase in the pretest and posttest mean scores in reading rate, but this increase was statistically not significant. There was also a slight decrease in the mean scores of errors per minute in reading fluency and a decrease in errors of words accurately identified for sight vocabulary. This change Indicated that the study offered some promising preliminary information about the effectiveness of the direct instruction of sight vocabulary, but the results were not statistically significant. Thus the hypothesis set forth in this study was accepted.

These results have important educational implications because it is often stated in education that direct teaching of word recognition is not pedagogically sound due to the fact that children do not transfer words identified in isolation to words in context. However, the improved automatic identification of words through direct instruction with daily repetition over the study's eight-week period was accompanied by more fluent reading and fewer errors and a faster reading rate.

Such findings have significant implications for future research to gain more insight on how reading fluency and reading rate may be strengthened by improving word recognition within the learning disabled population. There is a need not only for research to answer this question but the need to implement the research within the special education classroom and/or with learning disabled children, especially because there is a higher percentage of learning disabled students classified that receive special education due to reading difficulties. Another implication of interest is the fact that improved word recognition by daily direct instruction apparently leads to improved fluency and better reading comprehension.

These results have several implications for classroom practices. Simple word identification for learning disabled students through direct instruction provides an early incorporated tool at no cost. Single sight word identification through direct instruction can be taught to students, parents, and paraprofessionals for use in a home- based instruction or to reach a broader range of children in need within the school. The study reported here shows clearly that fluency gains and rate gains observed in context were obtained through single sight word direct instruction and do become generalized to reading those words in context.

Several limitations of this study should be recognized. This study spanned a relatively short period of time, with a small sample of nine students. The question of interest is whether or not had this study been conducted over a longer period of time with a greater population, would it yield more promising data. Another limitation of this study is that had this study been executed for a longer time period with perhaps pretesting in the fall and posttesting in the spring would it establish more of a difference between the control sample and the experimental sample. It might be that a longer exposure with repetitive practice in sight vocabulary might produce positive and conclusive results. In addition, the attribute of maintenance phase would also greatly strengthen the confidence in the results.

A further implication of this study to be considered would be that one of the students in the experimental group was absent and suspended from school for ten days throughout the course of this study. Also, there were a great number of interruptions within the time designated to execute the study that were beyond the examiner's control.

Had the eight week study been more consistent in time and not been so vulnerable to interruptions, it might have established more validity.

The fact that gains were noted in the experimental group greater than in the control group suggests that we may have to engage the learning disabled child in activities that foster word identification first and then advance them to more difficult text processing. These finding have significant implication for additional studies. More research is needed to analyze the short and long term effects of direct instruction of sight vocabulary with learning disabled students.

Admittedly the direct instruction of sight vocabulary with learning disabled students is not a cure all for all classified children, but it may be one of the most effective and economical ways of creating better readers.

RELATED RESEARCH

Many researchers have gathered data on sight words and have compiled sight word lists. A sight word is a word that is automatically identified without the aid of phonetic or analytical strategies, example: that, he, go, who, saw, home, ask, off, told, word, wear, hour. Such words are identified holistically because of their visually encoded letter string. Sight words are words that are most frequently used in reading material and therefore needed most frequently by students (Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1992). Good readers are different from poor readers in the sense that good readers have a large sight vocabulary.

The most commonly used sight word list was published in 1936. It is called the Dolch Sight Word List, it contains 220 basic sight words (Alexander & Heathington, 1988). The sight word approach was widely used from around 1930 until the mid-1960s. Sight word instruction focuses heavily on the identification of words, it focuses on the entire word rather than on the parts (Weaver, 1994). The Dolch Basic Sight Word List is powerful in that the list of words make-up approximately fifty to seventy-five percent of words that appear in print.

In 1975 a new list was developed of thirty nouns that were believed to be valuable to readers. Johns List of Nouns stated that these thirty words are worthy of being taught along with a list of thirteen words that were in accordance with the Dolch List, example: and, he, is, that, you, the, was. John has stated that these words "will usually account for one fourth of the words in print" (p. 234).

Two years later Edward Fry came up with Fry's List of "Instant Words", a list of

300 words grouped into sets of twenty-five words and correlating with grades first through fourth. The benefits of this list described by Fry are discussed further in this research.

Another list of sight words was copyrighted in 1978 by Don McCabe. McCabe reprinted the Dolch list but grouped the words according to word families for students. His rational for this was to make the words easier to remember. McCabe realized that phonetic families and sight words can be combined and used to assist students reading capabilities.

Walker, (1979) presented the American Heritage High Frequency List. These one thousand words accounted for 84.6 percent of running text in several subject areas according to ninety school districts as essential and recommended for children throughout grades third to ninth (Alexander & Heathington, 1988).

Then in 1980 Edward Fry composed an updated version of his sight vocabulary list. Fry's "Instant Words" contain six hundred words based on five million running words of library books and magazines relating to twelve different subject areas (Alexander & Heathington, 1988). Fry emphasized that the first ten words make-up approximately twenty-four percent of written material, the first one hundred words make-up about fifty percent and the first three hundred words make-up about sixty-five percent of all written material. The value of a student mastering the words to foster and build a base on which to build further word recognition strategies and reading skills for remedial students or learning disabled students is easily recognized.

Although many of these lists have been published years ago the words used in the

lists are still applicable to today's readers, reading problems and texts. Burns, Roe and Ross, 1996 declared " though first published in the 1930s sight words lists has repeatedly found to be relevant and useful in recent material"(p.95).

Today the sight word approach exists primarily as part of the basal reading program, with the assumption that once words are identified rapidly meaning can follow more readily (Weaver, 1994). Sight words provide a foundation for word recognition because they are recognized automatically. "Lack of adequate sight words is often a problem for remedial readers, students who do not have the necessary sight vocabulary to read fluently enough have trouble understanding the text" (p. 224).

The reading rate of a student who lacks adequate proficiency in sight vocabulary has a reading pace that is slow, reading each individual word at a time that they fail to acquire meaning. Comprehension, speed and fluency are all hindered the more times a student needs to stop to decode a word. Thus, the larger accumulation of sight vocabulary a reader has, the more rapidly and fluently a student can read material (Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1992).

A word recognition skill such as the direct instruction of sight vocabulary maybe used by students who are experiencing difficulties in reading to improve their reading ability (Alexander & Heathington, 1988). The importance of direct instruction relating to sight vocabulary gains support from literature relating to students with learning disabilities. Hale and Wilson (1986) concluded that the use of direct instruction of sight vocabulary increases time spent on academic tasks which is the single best indicator of academic growth among learning disabled students. Several studies have shown that

direct instruction tends to produce higher academic gains for a remedial student then does traditional techniques (Gersten, Carnine, & White, 1984).

Adams and Higgins (1985) repeatedly found that word recognition abilities and an individuals sight vocabulary is the single best class of discriminator between good and poor readers and have a considerable practical utility. Levy, Abello and Lysynchuk (1997) recommended that in order for a poor reader to become more fluent, children need to identify words within seconds in order for comprehension to occur. When words have received sufficient practice and automaticity is achieved the reader can focus less on processing the print word by word and use their processing skills to gain the message. There is considerable research stating that word acquisition and the recognition of words rapidly as a skill is a major correlate of reading (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991).

Laberge and Samuels (1974) position was similar to this in that the importance of transfer of word recognition to the criterion of automaticity permits the reader to dedicate full attention to comprehension. Noting this slow word recognition results in a break-down of fluency of reading and acquiring the message. Therefore, building a large bank of words permits the reader to be less frustrated with the text and concentrate on acquiring the message. Ehri and Wilce (1983) also feel that being able to identify sight vocabulary rapidly is thought to be one of the most pertinent accomplishments in learning to read. Stanovich, 1980, is quoted as saying, "evidence indicates that rapid context-free word recognition is one of the skills most clearly distinguishing skilled from less skilled readers".

Wong, (1984) concludes that for learning disabled students their primary problem

of difficulty is in identifying the individual words. Following the logic of Wong, even though the purpose of reading is to attain knowledge of what is written and not only identify the words, word identification difficulties are one of the most consistent obstacles for learning disabled children (Brown, Palincsar, & Purcell, 1986).

Students with Learning Disabilities Fourth Edition by Cecil D. Mercer covers a comprehensive view of the learning disabilities field, from the nature of the disability to remediation. One treatment that is covered, is the teaching of one hundred essential sight words to assist the learning disabled student with their reading disabilities.

For students with learning disabilities, recognizing words on sight is useful in achieving independence in reading and reading related activities (Browder & Shear, 1996). Not only is the teaching of sight vocabulary beneficial to learning disabled students but researchers have indicated it as an effective means to teach English as a Second Language.

Sight words not only enhance a learning disabled students ability to read and comprehend a text, but also can be used to help writing skills and help them function in society. For instance, Burns, Roe, and Ross, (1992) identified pertinent sight vocabulary words and the teaching of them can aid an individual to function better in the world, such as learning common names of favorite foods, restaurants, packing labels, street signs, days of the week and the months.

There are many different approaches to teaching sight vocabulary. Some of the most common methods are as follows:

- to present the word in a sentence
- to present the word alone

- to present the word with a picture (good for high imagery words, such as house and tree)
- to present the word in a phrase
- word families approach
- utilize games like Bingo
- flash card method
- visual configuration
- compare and contrast (used best with words like saw and was)
- story context with high frequency of sight vocabulary
- Language Experience Approach
- labeling home and or school environment
- through patterns or predictable books

No one method alone is seen as the final means for correcting learning disabled students reading difficulties. Teaching sight vocabulary through direct instruction can enhance efficiency, efficacy and motivational value of reading instruction (Browder & Shear, 1996). Samuel (1979) found that gains in word recognition were linked to reading rate and comprehension through direct instruction of sight word acquisition and transferred to unfamiliar reading passages. Research done by Rashotte and Torgesen (1985) show that one advantage of direct instruction of students with rudimentary word identification skills for high frequency words is that it has a positive impact on word identification and fluency in children with reading disabilities.

Research using variations of sight vocabulary connected to reading with a high degree of sight words in a passage has documented students growth in speed and accuracy and fluency (Dowhower, 1989). As students start to accumulate a store of sight words they can begin the process of reading. Samuels (1988) sees word recognition as a prerequisite for skilled reading. Ehri and Wilce (1979) observed and demonstrated as a result of more practice of sight words, words become recognized automatically as

wholes without deliberate processing. Therefore, more space in memory is now available for higher order tasks to occur and to be processed.

Teaching sight words to problem readers is beneficial for several reasons according to Alexander and Heathington who published a book entitled Assessing And Correcting Classroom Reading Problems. They feel that:

1. Sight words provide a foundation.
2. Can be useful for assessing a student's readability.
3. Use known sight words to generalize about unknown words.
4. Improve pace.
5. Improve reading ability.
6. Improve fluency.
7. Sight words are good for a springboard for further teaching of word recognition strategies.

Burns, Roe and Ross, Teaching Reading In Today's Elementary Schools, Fifth Edition, states that teaching sight words makes sense for the following reasons:

1. Whole words have meaning.
2. Gives students a chance to engage in successful reading experiences.
3. Due to irregularity of the spellings in the English Language, (through, know, two, of) sound-symbol relationship is hindered, sight words mastered by sight not orthographic analysis prove helpful when writing.
4. After a store of words is accumulated, further word strategies and reading skills can be approached.

Anderson et al., (1985) noted that "no matter which strategies are used to introduce them to reading the children who earned the best scores on reading comprehension tests in the second grades are the ones who made the most progress in fast and accurate word identification in the first grade" (p.10).

Espin and Deno (1989) developed a study on the effects on sight word training with students labeled learning disabled. They presented a Dolch Word List to two groups

of students and generated a pool of words for each group. The training period lasted several weeks and students had sessions three times per week. The pool of words for each group was put individually on flash cards. Each session, students had to identify the given word within three seconds. Group one received correction through direct instruction of modeling while group two received corrections by prompting.

At the conclusion of the study both groups were able to read more modeled words. Groups one learned 100 percent of modeled words and group two learned 60 percent of prompted words. A one month follow up was assessed and the results were that group one had retained 94.59 percent of words while group two retained 86. 96 percent. At three months the students were assessed again, group one at the three month follow up retained 78.38 percent of modeled words while group two retained 43.48 percent of prompted words. Espen and Deno's results clearly indicate that modeling sight vocabulary via direct instruction is more effective with the learning disabled population than prompting sight words for recognition.

Modeling and using a flashcard method to enhance a students sight vocabulary is effective because it provides an example, modeling a correct answer takes less time and allows for increased student opportunity for responses. A higher rate of responses is directly related to a higher rate of achievement for learning disabled students. Sindelor et al., 1986).

Barbetta, Miller, Peter, Heron and Chochran (1991) investigated a program with peer tutoring to teach sight vocabulary. The six week study involved six students, three Caucasian females and three Caucasian males. All six students were receiving part-time

special education services for their disabilities. The tutoring session had three main attributes: (1) intensive and individual practice of sight words, (2) testing of sight words and (3) practice of other academic skills. All words were ascertained from the Dolch and Fry Word Lists. An increase in the number of sight words mastered from pretest to posttest was measured.

The pretest mean score of all six students was 2.1 (range .9 to 3.2), after tutoring the mean was 9.4 (range 8.8 to 10) correct and data revealed gains of 9.4 (range 9.2 to 9.8) words mastered. Barbetta et al., (1991) also indicated improvements in students' performance of sight vocabulary words read correctly in sentences. Indicating there is a transfer from single word practice to passage. The mean performance at the pretest was 5.0 (range of 3.3 to 8.0) at tutoring the mean performance was 9.3 (range of 8 to 10) and during maintenance 9.5 mean (range of 9.2 to 10) of words identified correctly in sentences. The data word mastery remained above 90 percent, all students acquired and maintained a substantial number of new sight words after tutoring and the words mastered occurred with in a few sessions.

Barbetta, Heward and Bradley (1993) provided a study on the alternating treatments when comparing the effects of two procedures for the acquisition and maintenance of sight words by students with developmental disabilities. Five participants were involved, randomly assigned and were provided with daily one-to-one instruction with a set of fourteen unknown words. Students instruction were immediately followed by whole word error correction or phonetic correction.

Data from same day tests and next day tests showed students mastered more

words taught with the direct instruction of whole word then they learned from phonetic error correction. These results support those of Espin and Deno that the effects of whole word and phonetic instruction for the acquisition and maintenance of sight words by students with developmental disabilities is advantageous for them.

Barbetta et al., provided a follow up study to the pervious one mentioned and found a mean overall agreement score of 99.5 percent for same day test, 99.8 percent for next day and 100 percent for practice and maintenance words at a high rate producing better academic gains through direct instruction of whole words for sight recognition.

Levy, Abello and Lysynchuk (1997) reported on a study that examined the connection between sight word identification and speed and fluency. The study was conducted on fourth grade students reading a set of single words until mastery then reading an unknown passage with a high degree of words mastered from the sight word list. The study reported clearly that fluency gains were noted in independent word recognition skills and generalized to reading the words in context.

Cohen, Torgesen and Torgesen (1988) provided a study, which assessed computer programs designed to increase sight words for learning disabled children. The participants were measured for accuracy and speed in pre and posttest. Participants read approximately three percent of words at the pretest, at the posttest words were read with eighty percent to ninety percent accuracy.

Shear and Browder (1996) observed the effectiveness of teaching sight words to middle school students with moderate mental retardation. The three subjects had a

baseline as indicated: student 1- identified 1 out of 10 words, student 2 identified 0 out of 10 words and student 3 identified 1 out of 10 words. During the intervention stage students were assessed and the results were: student 1 mastered all 10 words in 29 sessions, student 2 mastered 10 words in 15 sessions and student 3 mastered all words in 11 sessions.

All three students not only mastered the sight vocabulary words but maintained correct reading of the words on the follow up test. Shear and Browder extended this study and connected it to fluency, to see if there was a correlation between sight words mastered and reading fluency. Student 1 was reading 13 words with 22 errors at the pretest after the intervention stage student 1 was reading 13 words and had a drop in errors to 10 errors a reading. Student 2 showed progress from no words read correct with about 25 errors to reading 10 words correctly with only twelve errors.

Results of an experiment implemented by Bialozor and McLaughin (1989) who used fourteen remedial students over a period of five weeks showed that when a direct teaching approach was provided for these students on sight word vocabularies, the test scores from the *Woodcock Johnson PsychoEducational Battery* were higher and such instructions produced higher academic gains for remedial students than did traditional approaches. The mean grade level of direct instruction with the students was 3.7 on the pretest. The posttest revealed a 4.4, which is a gain of .7. The mean percentile rank for the direct instruction of sight vocabulary was 24 percent on the posttest. This indicated a gain of 15 percent.

Finally, Fleisher et al., (1979) executed a study that show a direct transfer from

single word training to reading in context. Fleisher et al., had asked poor readers in grades fourth and fifth to practice reading word sets until they could identify the word in less than a second. After students successfully identified the words in the prescribed time, the participants then read a passage. They were recorded for speed and accuracy. The test of transfer words to passage reading revealed that poor readers read the passage faster and more accurately than they had with a similar passage at the onset of the study.

These results are consistent with other evidence indicating that less skilled readers ability to read whole words develops more readily and rapidly then their letter sound decoding ability and is a direct correlate to rate, fluency, speed and freeing up the mind for other processing skills to occur. Fasco (1996) states that sight vocabulary can be a useful strategy to develop fluency in oral reading. This method of instruction can be a beneficial means of producing and improving reading rate, fluency and possibly self-esteem. All of the preceding results suggest that we as educator may want to engage students first in activities that develop sight vocabulary so that they can advance to more difficult text processing.

In summary, the research demonstrates some promising preliminary information regarding the effectiveness for students with a learning disability of achieving basic sight word recognition fluency, it can allow text reading more fluently, correctly and rapidly. Then, the introduction of a broader genre of literature and skills can occur more readily and with less frustration for the reader. However, further research is needed to explore a more in-depth look and the effects of sight vocabulary on learning disabled readers.

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APPENDIX

The School Play

I woke up early on the morning of the school play and found my sister and my mother sitting at the kitchen table talking about tonight's show. The three of us were so excited. While we talked and ate breakfast we worked out the last little details for the show tonight. The show was to start at eight o'clock. I was suppose to bring the boxes of presents that were decorated with red and yellow colors for the play. All day long I kept checking again and again to make sure we had all we needed. A few hours before the show my sister and I read over our lines to try to get better before the show. As we got dressed we started to get real nervous. My mother was so proud of us she kept telling us we shall do just fine. Upon entering the school we saw that it looked as though the entire town had come out for the performance. We couldn't believe our eyes. Finally, the curtained opened and our long work was about to pay off. At the end of the play we felt like we had done a good job. As we took our final bow for the audience, we realized our long work and practice was worth it. All the people we standing, clapping and cheering. The night was a great hit.